

more Air Cobras. The Army planes, which had serious altitude and climb-rate deficiencies, were destined to see most action in ground combat support roles.

The frenzied action in what became known as the Battle of the Eastern Solomons was matched ashore. Japanese destroyers had delivered the vanguard of the Ichiki force at Taivu Point, 25 miles east of the Marine perimeter. A long-range patrol of Marines from Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines ambushed a sizable Japanese force near Taivu on 19 August. The Japanese dead were readily identified as Army troops and the debris of their defeat included fresh uniforms and a large amount of communication gear. Clearly, a new phase of the fighting had begun. All Japanese encountered to this point had been naval troops.

Alerted by patrols, the Marines now dug in along the Ilu River, often misnamed the Tenaru on Marine maps, were ready for Colonel Ichiki. The Japanese commander's orders directed him to "quickly recapture and maintain the airfield at Guadalcanal," and his own directive to his

troops emphasized that they would fight "to the last breath of the last man." And they did.

Too full of his mission to wait for the rest of his regiment and sure that he faced only a few thousand men overall, Ichiki marched from Taivu to the Marines' lines. Before he attacked on the night of the 20th, a bloody figure stumbled out of the jungle with a warning that the Japanese were coming. It was Sergeant Major Vouza. Captured by the Japanese, who found a small American flag secreted in his loincloth, he was tortured in a failed attempt to gain information on the invasion force. Tied to a tree, bayoneted twice through the chest, and beaten with rifle butts, the resolute Vouza chewed through his bindings to escape. Taken to Lieutenant Colonel Edwin A. Pollock, whose 2d Battalion, 1st Marines held the Ilu mouth's defenses, he gasped a warning that an estimated 250-500 Japanese soldiers were coming behind him. The resolute Vouza, rushed immediately to an aid station and then to the division hospital, miraculously survived his ordeal and was awarded a Silver Star

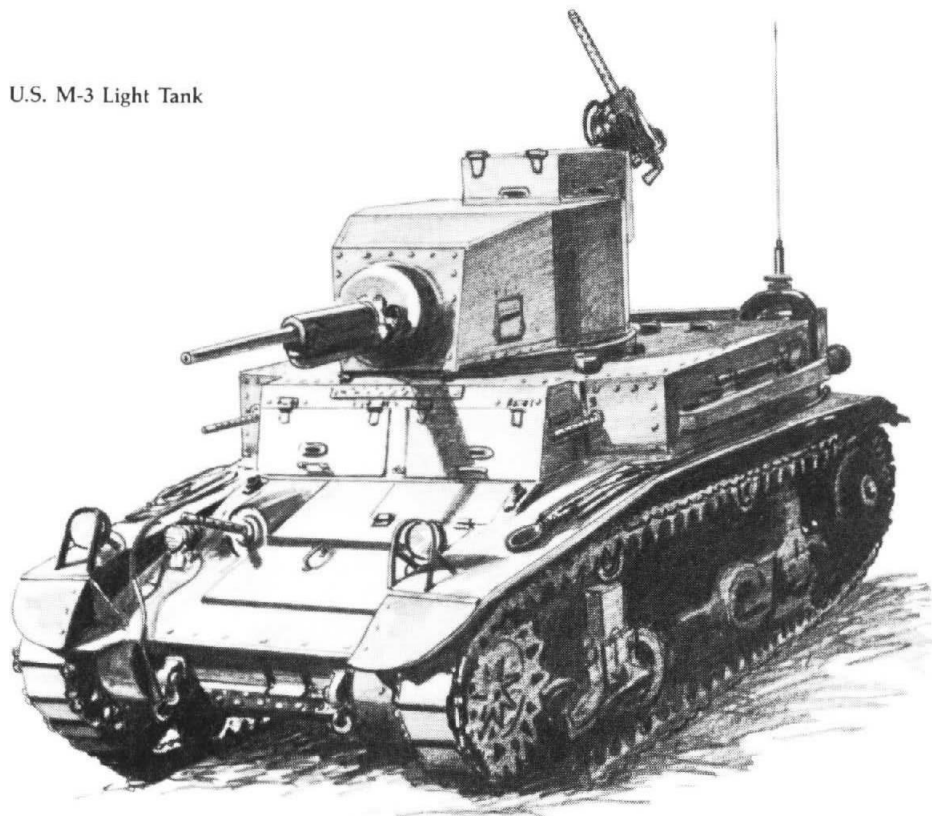
for his heroism by General Vandegrift, and later a Legion of Merit. Vandegrift also made Vouza an honorary sergeant major of U.S. Marines.

At 0130 on 21 August, Ichiki's troops stormed the Marines' lines in a screaming, frenzied display of the "spiritual strength" which they had been assured would sweep aside their American enemy. As the Japanese charged across the sand bar astride the Ilu's mouth, Pollock's Marines cut them down. After a mortar preparation, the Japanese tried again to storm past the sand bar. A section of 37mm guns sprayed the enemy force with deadly canister. Lieutenant Colonel Lenard B. Cresswell's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines moved upstream on the Ilu at daybreak, waded across the sluggish, 50-foot-wide stream, and moved on the flank of the Japanese. Wildcats from VMF-223 strafed the beleaguered enemy force. Five light tanks blasted the retreating Japanese. By 1700, as the sun was setting, the battle ended.

Colonel Ichiki, disgraced in own mind by his defeat, burned his regimental colors and shot himself. Close to 800 of his men joined him in death. The few survivors fled eastward towards Taivu Point. Rear Admiral Raizo Tanaka, whose reinforcement force of transports and destroyers was largely responsible for the subsequent Japanese troop build-up on Guadalcanal, recognized that the unsupported Japanese attack was sheer folly and reflected that "this tragedy should have taught us the hopelessness of bamboo spear tactics." Fortunately for the Marines, Ichiki's overconfidence was not unique among Japanese commanders.

Following the 1st Marines' tangle with the Ichiki detachment, General Vandegrift was inspired to write the Marine Commandant, Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, and report: "These youngsters are the darndest people when they get start-

U.S. M-3 Light Tank





Captain Donald L. Dickson, USMCR

Capt Donald L. Dickson said of his watercolor: "I wanted to catch on paper the feeling one has as a shell comes whistling over. . . . There is a sense of being alone, naked and unprotected. And time seems endless until the shell strikes somewhere."

ed you ever saw." And all the Marines on the island, young and old, tyro and veteran, were becoming accomplished jungle fighters. They were no longer "trigger happy" as many had been in their first days ashore, shooting at shadows and imagined enemy. They were waiting for targets, patrolling with enthusiasm, sure of themselves. The misnamed Battle of the Tenaru had cost Colonel Hunt's regiment 34 killed in action and 75 wounded. All the division's Marines now felt they were bloodied. What the men on Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo and those of the Ilu had done was prove that the 1st Marine Division would hold fast to what it had won.

While the division's Marines and sailors had earned a breathing spell as the Japanese regrouped for another onslaught, the action in the air over the Solomons intensified. Almost every day, Japanese aircraft arrived around noon to bomb the perimeter. Marine fighter pilots found the twin-engine Betty bombers

easy targets; Zero fighters were another story. Although the Wildcats were a much sturdier aircraft, the Japanese Zeros' superior speed and better maneuverability gave them a distinct edge in a dogfight. The American planes, however, when warned by the coastwatchers of Japanese attacks, had time to climb above the oncoming enemy and preferably attacked by making firing runs during high speed dives. Their tactics made the air space over the Solomons dangerous for the Japanese. On 29 August, the carrier *Ryujo* launched aircraft for a strike against the airstrip. Smith's Wildcats shot down 16, with a loss of four of their own. Still, the Japanese continued to strike at Henderson Field without letup. Two days after the *Ryujo* raid, enemy bombers inflicted heavy damage on the airfield, setting aviation fuel ablaze and incinerating parked aircraft. VMF-223's retaliation was a further bag of 13 attackers.

On 30 August, two more MAG-23

squadrons, VMF-224 and VMSB-231, flew in to Henderson. The air reinforcements were more than welcome. Steady combat attrition, frequent damage in the air and on the ground, and scant repair facilities and parts kept the number of aircraft available a dwindling resource.

Plainly, General Vandegrift needed Cactus Air Force commander, MajGen Roy S. Geiger, poses with Capt Joseph J. Foss, the leading ace at Guadalcanal with 26 Japanese aircraft downed. Capt Foss was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic exploits in the air.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 52622



ed infantry reinforcements as much as he did additional aircraft. He brought the now-combined raider and parachute battalions, both under Edson's command, and the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, over to Guadalcanal from Tulagi. This gave the division commander a chance to order out larger reconnaissance patrols to probe for the Japanese. On 27 August, the 1st Battalion, 5th Ma-

rines, made a shore-to-shore landing near Kokumbona and marched back to the beachhead without any measurable results. If the Japanese were out there beyond the Matanikau—and they were—they watched the Marines and waited for a better opportunity to attack.

September and the Ridge

Admiral McCain visited Guadal-

canal at the end of August, arriving in time to greet the aerial reinforcements he had ordered forward, and also in time for a taste of Japanese nightly bombing. He got to experience, too, what was becoming another unwanted feature of Cactus nights: bombardment by Japanese cruisers and destroyers. General Vandegrift noted that McCain had gotten a dose of the "normal ration of

Sergeant Major Sir Jacob Charles Vouza

Jacob Charles Vouza was born in 1900 at Tasimboko, Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands Protectorate, and educated at the South Seas Evangelical Mission School there. In 1916 he joined the Solomon Islands Protectorate Armed Constabulary, from which he retired at the rank of sergeant major in 1941 after 25 years of service.

After the Japanese invaded his home island in World War II, he returned to active duty with the British forces and volunteered to work with the Coastwatchers. Vouza's experience as a scout had already been established when the 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal. On 7 August 1942 he rescued a downed naval pilot from the USS *Wasp* who was shot down inside Japanese territory. He guided the pilot to friendly lines where Vouza met the Marines for the first time.

Vouza then volunteered to scout behind enemy lines for the Marines. On 27 August he was captured by the Japanese while on a Marine Corps mission to locate suspected enemy lookout stations. Having found a small American flag in Vouza's loincloth, the Japanese tied him to a tree and tried to force him to reveal information about Allied forces. Vouza was questioned for hours, but refused to talk. He was tortured and bayoneted about the arms, throat, shoulder, face, and stomach, and left to die.

He managed to free himself after his captors departed, and made his way through the miles of jungle to American lines. There he gave valuable intelligence information to the Marines about an impending Japanese attack before accepting medical attention.

After spending 12 days in the hospital, Vouza then returned to duty as the chief scout for the Marines. He accompanied Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson and the 2d Marine Raider Battalion when they made their 30-day raid behind enemy lines at Guadalcanal.

Sergeant Major Vouza was highly decorated for his World War II service. The Silver Star was presented to him personally by Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, for refusing to give information under Japanese torture. He also was awarded the Legion of Merit for outstanding service with the 2d Raider Battalion during November and December 1942, and the British George Medal for gallant conduct and

exceptional devotion to duty. He later received the Police Long Service Medal and, in 1957, was made a Member of the British Empire for long and faithful government service.

After the war, Vouza continued to serve his fellow islanders. In 1949, he was appointed district headman, and president of the Guadalcanal Council, from 1952-1958. He served as a member of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate Advisory Council from 1950 to 1960.

He made many friends during his long association with the U.S. Marine Corps and through the years was continually visited on Guadalcanal by Marines. During 1968, Vouza visited the United States, where he was the honored guest of the 1st Marine Division Association. In 1979, he was knighted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. He died on 15 March 1984.—Ann A. Ferrante



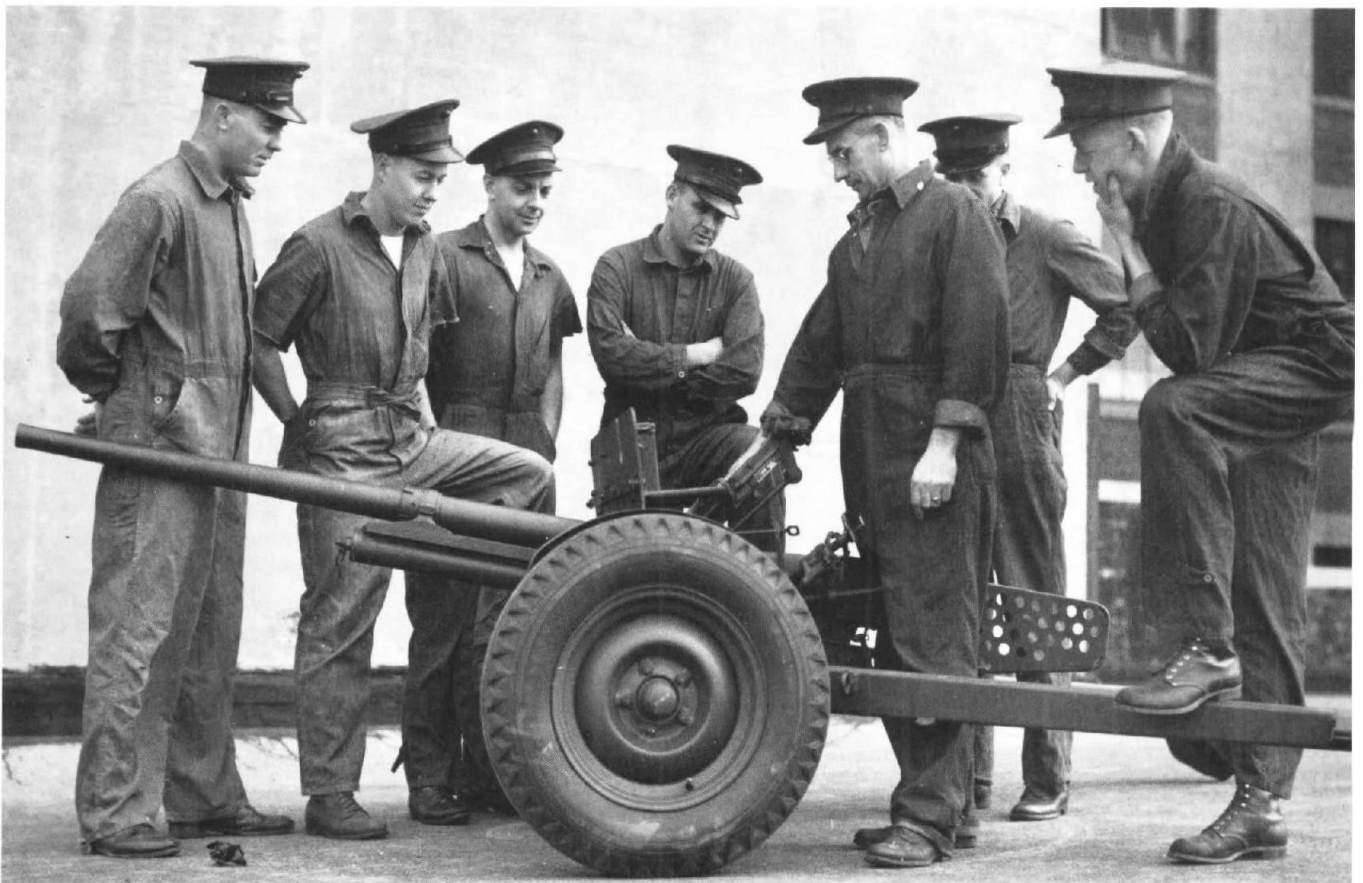
M3A1 37mm Antitank Gun

The M3 antitank gun, based on the successful German *Panzer Abwehr Kanone* (PAK)-36, was developed by the U.S. Army in the late 1930s as a replacement for the French 37mm Puteaux gun, used in World War I but unable to destroy new tanks being produced.

The M3 was adopted because of its accuracy, fire control, penetration, and mobility. Towed by its prime mover, the 4x4 quarter-ton truck, the gun would trail at 50 mph on roads. When traveling crosscountry, gullies, shell holes, mud holes, and slopes of 26 degrees were negotiated with ease. In 1941, the gun was redesignated the M3A1 when the muzzles were threaded to accept a muzzle brake that was rarely, if ever, used.

At the time of its adoption, the M3 could destroy any tank then being produced in the world. However, by the time the United States entered the war, the M3 was outmatched by the tanks it would have met in Europe. The Japanese tanks were smaller and more vulnerable to the M3 throughout the war. In the Pacific, it was used against bunkers, pillboxes and, when loaded with canister, against banzai charges. It was employed throughout the war by Marine regimental weapons companies, but in reduced numbers as the fighting continued. It was replaced in the European Theater by the M1 57mm antitank gun.

The 37mm antitank gun, manned by a crew of four who fired a 1.61-pound projectile with an effective range of 500 yards. — *Stephen L. Amos and Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas*



shells." The admiral saw enough to signal his superiors that increased support for Guadalcanal operations was imperative and that the "situation admits no delay whatsoever." He also sent a prophetic message to Admirals King and Nimitz: "Cactus can be a sinkhole for enemy air power and can be consolidated, expanded, and exploited to the enemy's mortal hurt."

On 3 September, the Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Brigadier General Roy S. Geiger, and his assistant wing commander, Colonel Louis Woods, moved forward to Guadalcanal to take charge of air operations. The arrival of the veteran Marine aviators provided an instant lift to the morale of the pilots and ground crews. It reinforced their belief that they were

at the leading edge of air combat, that they were setting the pace for the rest of Marine aviation. Vandegrift could thankfully turn over the day-to-day management of the aerial defenses of Cactus to the able and experienced Geiger. There was no shortage of targets for the mixed air force of Marine, Army, and Navy flyers. Daily air attacks by the Japanese, coupled with steady rein-



National Archives Photo 80-G-29536-413C)

This is an oblique view of Henderson Field looking north with the left center is the "Pagoda," operations center of Cactus Air Force flyers throughout their first months of operations ashore.

forcement attempts by Tanaka's destroyers and transports, meant that every type of plane that could lift off Henderson's runway was airborne as often as possible. Seabees had begun work on a second airstrip, Fighter One, which could relieve some of the pressure on the primary airfield.

Most of General Kawaguchi's brigade had reached Guadalcanal. Those who hadn't, missed their landfall forever as a result of American air attacks. Kawaguchi had in mind a surprise attack on the heart of the Marine position, a thrust from the jungle directly at the airfield. To reach his jumpoff position, the Japanese general would have to move through difficult terrain unobserved, carving his way through the dense vegetation out of sight of Marine patrols. The rugged approach route would lead him to a prominent ridge topped by Kunai grass which wove snake-like through the jungle to within a mile of Henderson's runway. Unknown to the Japanese, General Vandegrift planned on moving his headquarters to the shelter of a spot at the inland base of this ridge, a site

better protected, it was hoped, from enemy bombing and shellfire.

The success of Kawaguchi's plan depended upon the Marines keeping the inland perimeter thinly manned while they concentrated their forces on the east and west flanks. This was not to be. Available intelligence, in-

cluding a captured enemy map, pointed to the likelihood of an attack on the airfield and Vandegrift moved his combined raider-parachute battalion to the most obvious enemy approach route, the ridge. Colonel Edson's men, who scouted Savo Island after moving to Guadalcanal and destroyed a Japanese supply base

Marine ground crewmen attempt to put out one of many fires occurring after a Japanese bombing raid on Henderson Field causing the loss of much-needed aircraft.

Marine Corps Personal Papers Collection



at Tasimboko in another shore-to-shore raid, took up positions on the forward slopes of the ridge at the edge of the encroaching jungle on 10 September. Their commander later said that he "was firmly convinced that we were in the path of the next Jap attack." Earlier patrols had spotted a sizable Japanese force approaching. Accordingly, Edson patrolled extensively as his men dug in on the ridge and in the flanking jungle. On the 12th, the Marines made contact with enemy patrols confirming the fact that Japanese troops were definitely "out front." Kawaguchi had about 2,000 of his men with him, enough he thought to punch through to the airfield.

Japanese planes had dropped 500-pound bombs along the ridge on the 11th and enemy ships began shelling the area after nightfall on the

12th, once the threat of American air attacks subsided. The first Japanese thrust came at 2100 against Edson's left flank. Boiling out of the jungle, the enemy soldiers attacked fearlessly into the face of rifle and machine gun fire, closing to bayonet range. They were thrown back. They came again, this time against the right flank, penetrating the Marines' positions. Again they were thrown back. A third attack closed out the night's action. Again it was a close affair, but by 0230 Edson told Vandegrift his men could hold. And they did.

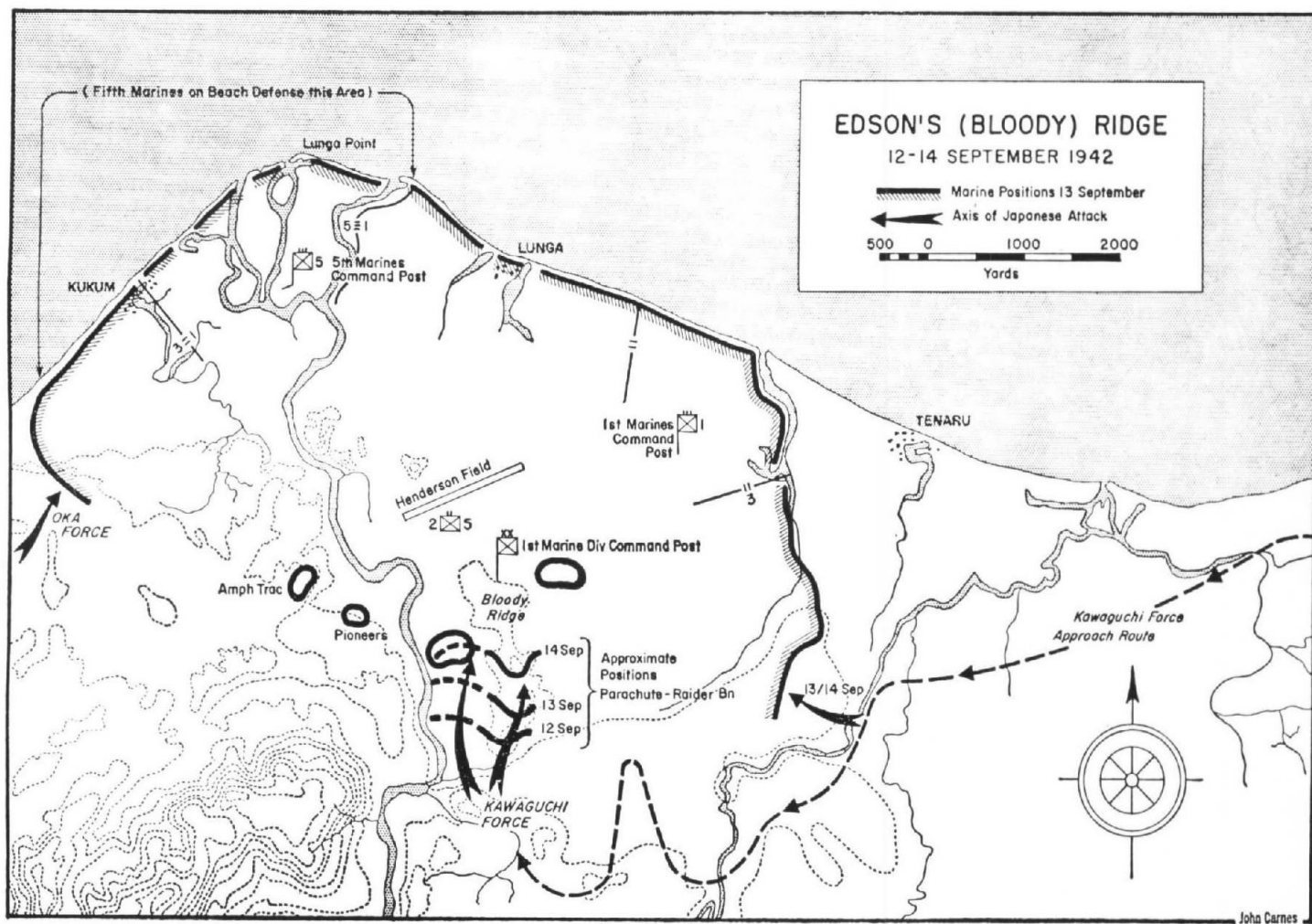
On the morning of 13 September, Edson called his company commanders together and told them: "They were just testing, just testing. They'll be back." He ordered all positions improved and defenses consolidated and pulled his lines towards the airfield along the ridge's center

spine. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, his backup on Tulagi, moved into position to reinforce again.

The next night's attacks were as fierce as any man had seen. The Japanese were everywhere, fighting hand-to-hand in the Marines' fox-holes and gun pits and filtering past forward positions to attack from the rear. Division Sergeant Major Sheffield Banta shot one in the new command post. Colonel Edson appeared wherever the fighting was toughest, encouraging his men to their utmost efforts. The man-to-man battles lapped over into the jungle on either flank of the ridge, and engineer and pioneer positions were attacked. The reserve from the 5th Marines was fed into the fight. Artillerymen from the 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, as they had on the previous night, fired their 105mm howitzers at any

The raging battle of Edson's Ridge is depicted in all its fury in this oil painting by the late Col Donald L. Dickson, who, as a captain, was adjutant of the 5th Marines on Guadalcanal. Dickson's artwork later was shown widely in the United States.
 Captain Donald L. Dickson, USMCR



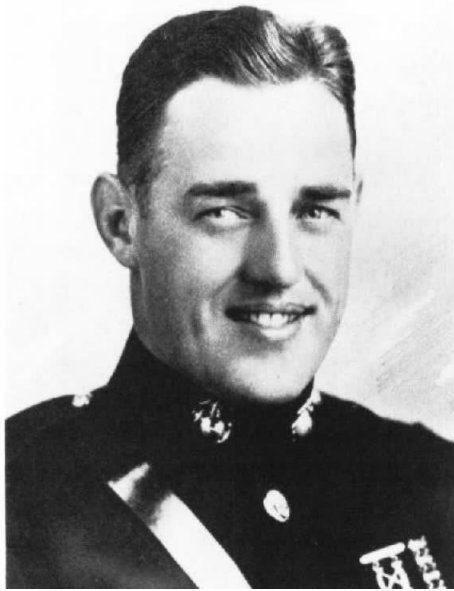


Edson's or Raider's Ridge is calm after the fighting on the nights of 12-13 and 13-14 September, when it was the scene of a valiant and bloody defense crucial to safeguarding Henderson

Field and the Marine perimeter on Guadalcanal. The knobs at left background were Col Edson's final defensive position, while Henderson Field lies beyond the trees in the background.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 500007





Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 310563)
Maj Kenneth D. Bailey, commander of
Company C, 1st Raider Battalion, was
awarded the Medal of Honor posthu-
mously for heroic and inspiring leader-
ship during the Battle of Edson's Ridge.

called target. The range grew as short as 1,600 yards from tube to impact. The Japanese finally could take no more. They pulled back as dawn approached. On the slopes of the ridge and in the surrounding jungle they left more than 600 bodies; another 600 men were wounded. The remnants of the Kawaguchi force staggered back toward their lines to the west, a grueling, hellish eight-day march that saw many more of the enemy perish.

The cost to Edson's force for its epic defense was also heavy. Fifty-nine men were dead, 10 were missing in action, and 194 were wounded. These losses, coupled with the casualties of Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo, meant the end of the 1st Parachute Battalion as an effective fighting unit. Only 89 men of the

parachutists' original strength could walk off the ridge, soon in legend to become "Bloody Ridge" or "Edson's Ridge." Both Colonel Edson and Captain Kenneth D. Bailey, commanding the raider's Company C, were awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroic and inspirational actions.

On 13 and 14 September, the Japanese attempted to support Kawaguchi's attack on the ridge with thrusts against the flanks of the Marine perimeter. On the east, enemy troops attempting to penetrate the lines of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, were caught in the open on a grass plain and smothered by artillery fire; at least 200 died. On the west, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, holding ridge positions covering the coastal road, fought off a determined attacking force that reached its front lines.

The Pagoda at Henderson Field, served as headquarters for Cactus Air Force throughout the first months of air operations

on Guadalcanal. From this building, Allied planes were sent against Japanese troops on other islands of the Solomons.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 50921



The victory at the ridge gave a great boost to Allied homefront morale, and reinforced the opinion of the men ashore on Guadalcanal that they could take on anything the enemy could send against them. At upper command echelons, the leaders were not so sure that the ground Marines and their motley air force could hold. Intercepted Japanese dispatches revealed that the myth of the 2,000-man defending force had been completely dispelled. Sizable naval forces and two divisions of Japanese troops were now committed to conquer the Americans on Guadalcanal. Cactus Air Force, augmented frequently by Navy carrier squadrons, made the planned reinforcement effort a high-risk venture. But it was a risk the Japanese were prepared to take.

On 18 September, the long-awaited 7th Marines, reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and other division troops, arrived at Guadalcanal. As the men from Samoa landed they were greeted with friendly derision by Marines already on the island. The 7th had been the first regiment of the 1st Division to go overseas; its men, many thought then, were likely to be the first to see combat. The division had been careful to send some of its best men to Samoa and now had them back. One of the new and salty combat veterans of the 5th Marines remarked to a friend in the 7th that he had waited a long time "to see our first team get into the game." Providentially, a separate supply convoy reached the island at the same time as the 7th's arrival, bringing with it badly needed aviation gas and the first resupply of ammunition since D-Day.

The Navy covering force for the American reinforcement and supply convoys was hit hard by Japanese submarines. The carrier *Wasp* was torpedoed and sunk, the battleship *North Carolina* (BB 55) was damaged, and the destroyer *O'Brien* (DD 415) was hit so badly it broke

up and sank on its way to drydock. The Navy had accomplished its mission, the 7th Marines had landed, but at a terrible cost. About the only good result of the devastating Japanese torpedo attacks was that the *Wasp's* surviving aircraft joined Cactus Air Force, as the planes of the *Saratoga* and *Enterprise* had done when their carriers required combat repairs. Now, the *Hornet* (CV 8) was the only whole fleet carrier left in the South Pacific.

As the ships that brought the 7th Marines withdrew, they took with them the survivors of the 1st Parachute Battalion and sick bays full of badly wounded men. General Vandegrift now had 10 infantry battalions, one understrength raider battalion, and five artillery battalions ashore; the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, had come over from Tulagi also. He reorganized the defensive perimeter into 10 sectors for better control, giving the engineer, pioneer, and amphibian tractor battalions sectors along the beach. Infantry battalions manned the other sectors, including the inland perimeter in the jungle. Each infantry regiment had two battalions on line and one in reserve. Vandegrift also had the use of a select group of infantrymen who were training to be scouts and snipers under the leadership of Colonel William J. "Wild Bill" Whaling, an experienced jungle hand, marksman, and hunter, whom he had appointed to run a school to sharpen the division's fighting skills. As men finished their training under Whaling and went back to their outfits, others took their place and the Whaling group was available to scout and spearhead operations.

Vandegrift now had enough men ashore on Guadalcanal, 19,200, to expand his defensive scheme. He decided to seize a forward position along the east bank of the Matanikau River, in effect strongly outposting his west flank defenses against the probability of strong enemy attacks

from the area where most Japanese troops were landing. First, however, he was going to test the Japanese reaction with a strong probing force.

He chose the fresh 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, to move inland along the slopes of Mt. Austen and patrol north towards the coast and the Japanese-held area. Puller's battalion ran into Japanese troops bivouacked on the slopes of Austen on the 24th and in a sharp firefight had seven men killed and 25 wounded. Vandegrift sent the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, forward to reinforce Puller and help provide the men needed to carry the casualties out of the jungle. Now reinforced, Puller continued his advance, moving down the east bank of the Matanikau. He reached the coast on the 26th as planned, where he drew intensive fire from enemy positions on the ridges west of the river. An attempt by the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, to cross was beaten back.

About this time, the 1st Raider Battalion, its original mission one of establishing a patrol base west of the Matanikau, reached the vicinity of the firefight, and joined in. Vandegrift sent Colonel Edson, now the commander of the 5th Marines, forward to take charge of the expanded force. He was directed to attack on the 27th and decided to send the raiders inland to outflank the Japanese defenders. The battalion, commanded by Edson's former executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Griffith II, ran into a hornet's nest of Japanese who had crossed the Matanikau during the night. A garbled message led Edson to believe that Griffith's men were advancing according to plan, so he decided to land the companies of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, behind the enemy's Matanikau position and strike the Japanese from the rear while Rosecranc's men attacked across the river.

The landing was made without in-

The President of the United States
takes pleasure in presenting
the Medal of Honor posthumously to
Douglas Albert Munro
Signalman First Class
United States Coast Guard
for service as set forth
in the following citation:

For extraordinary heroism and conspicuous gallantry in action above and beyond the call of duty as Officer in Charge of a group of twenty-four Higgins boats engaged in the evacuation of a battalion of Marines trapped by enemy Japanese forces at Point Cruz, Guadalcanal, on September 27, 1942. After making preliminary plans for the evacuation of nearly five hundred beleaguered Marines, Munro, under constant strafing by enemy machine guns on the island and at great risk of his life, daringly led five of his small craft toward the shore. As he closed the beach, he signalled the others to land and then in order to draw the enemy's fire and protect the heavily loaded boats, he valiantly placed his craft, with its two small guns, as a shield between the beachhead and the Japanese. When the perilous task of evacuation was nearly completed, Munro was instantly killed by enemy fire, but his crew, two of whom were



Painting by Bernard D'Andrea, Courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Historical Office

wounded, carried on until the last boat had loaded and cleared the beach. By his outstanding leadership, expert planning, and dauntless devotion to duty, he and his cou-

rageous comrades undoubtedly saved the lives of many who otherwise would have perished. He gallantly gave up his life in defense of his country. /s/ Franklin Roosevelt

cident and the 7th Marines' companies moved inland only to be ambushed and cut off from the sea by the Japanese. A rescue force of landing craft moved with difficulty through Japanese fire, urged on by

Shortly after becoming Commander, South Pacific Area and Forces, VAdm William F. Halsey visited Guadalcanal and the 1st Marine Division. Here he is shown talking with Col Gerald C. Thomas, 1st Marine Division D-3 (Operations Officer).

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 53523



Puller who accompanied the boats on the destroyer *Ballard* (DD 660). The Marines were evacuated after fighting their way to the beach covered by the destroyer's fire and the machine guns of a Marine SBD over-

head. Once the 7th Marines companies got back to the perimeter, landing near Kukum, the raider and 5th Marines battalions pulled back from the Matanikau. The confirmation that the Japanese would strongly contest any westward advance cost the Marines 60 men killed and 100 wounded.

The Japanese the Marines had encountered were mainly men from the 4th Regiment of the 2d (Sendai) Division; prisoners confirmed that the division was landing on the island. Included in the enemy reinforcements were 150mm howitzers, guns capable of shelling the airfield from positions near Kokumbona. Clearly, a new and stronger enemy attack was pending.

As September drew to a close, a flood of promotions had reached the division, nine lieutenant colonels put on their colonel's eagles and there were 14 new lieutenant colonels also. Vandegrift made Colonel Gerald C. Thomas, his former operations